

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION:

At page 1, after the title and before line 1, add the following new paragraph:

This application claims the benefit of the filing date of U.S. Provisional Application Serial No. 60/128,785 filed April 12, 1999. This application is a divisional of U.S. Ser. No. 09/09/528,200, filed March 17, 2000.

At page 3, after the second full paragraph, please insert the following heading:

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

At page 7, before the first full paragraph, please insert the following:

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Figure 1 shows the synthesis of 1,1'-bis (4-sulfobutyl)indocarbocyanine-5-carboxylic acid, sodium salt (1); 1,1'-bis (4-sulfobutyl)indodicarbocyanine-5-carboxylic acid, sodium salt (2); and 1,1'-bis (4-sulfobutyl)indotricarbocyanine-5-carboxylic acid, sodium salt (3).

Figure 2 shows the synthesis of indocyanine dyes 4-6, 7-9, and 10-12 from 1-3 solid-phase-synthetic coupling to amino groups (N-terminal or ϵ -lysine) of the peptides.

Figure 3 shows the resin synthesis of peptide conjugates of VIP-receptor-binding peptides and dye 13.

Figure 4 shows the photophysical properties of dye-peptide conjugates 14-38.

Figure 5 shows the absorption and fluorescence spectra of the synthesized dye-peptide conjugates.

Figure 6 shows the chemical stability of the dye conjugates with VIP-receptor-binding peptides in bovine plasma over a 24 hour in vitro time course using HPLC.

Figure 7 shows the relative fluorescence intensities of RIN38 VPAC1 cells after incubation in the presence of 150 nM of the dye-labeled peptides for 1 hour at 37° C. The data is expressed in percentage relative to the native peptide of the respective series.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION